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VACATION TRIPS IN THE COCHETOPA NATIONAL FOREST



MOTORING INTO MOUNTAIN LAND ALONG THE MONARCH PASS ROAD

United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service : : 1919

VACATION TRIPS IN THE COCHETOPA NATIONAL FOREST

ON THE GREAT DIVIDE.

WHO would not be attracted by the thought of a vacation spent on the Great Divide, that mighty crest of the continent, where towering peaks, jeweled lakes, tree-clad slopes, and green parks await the lover of nature and the out-of-doors? In the heart of this great mountain playground is the Cochetopa National Forest, whose more than 900,000 acres stretch for 60 miles along the Divide in Chaffee, Hinsdale, and Saguache Counties and contain some of the most rugged and picturesque scenery to be found in Colorado.

Here are peaks for the mountain climber, excellent automobile roads for the tourist, well-stocked streams for the angler, shady sites with good springs and plenty of fuel wood nearby for the camper, and graded trails for the nature lover. There is duck shooting along the shores of the lakes in the near-by San Luis Valley, and on many of the mountain ridges grouse are plentiful. No "Keep off" signs bar the way to the choicest spots; the National Forests are public property and visitors are everywhere welcome.

Those who like to take their camera into the woods will find in the Cochetopa Forest opportunities for obtaining pictures of wild game in its native haunts. Deer, ptarmigan, mountain sheep, and elk have their home here. The Colorado game laws, which apply in the National Forests as well as outside, at present forbid the hunting of most big game animals. Predatory animals, however, may be killed throughout the year. Visitors to the Cochetopa Forest are free to fish in the streams during the summer months, and excellent sport awaits the angler.

The name Cochetopa is derived from the Ute Indian language, and though given many interpretations, is said by some of the older Indians themselves to mean "Little Island." Viewed from the old Indian agency on Pinos Creek, which overlooked the great plain, the mountain now called Cochetopa Dome stood above the surrounding country not unlike a small island rising above the water. This peak was, therefore, called "Little Island" by the Utes, and the name has since been applied to the entire mountain range in this region.

The most attractive way to visit the Forest is by automobile, via the "Rainbow Route" over the Cochetopa Pass or Monarch Pass highways. From these good mountain roads branch out in many directions and may be readily traveled in summer. The most distant and secluded parts of the mountains, however, can be reached only by wagon or with a pack outfit. All roads and trails have been well posted with guide signs, and on the main routes of travel bulletin boards and cases containing maps of the Forest will be found for the guidance of visitors.

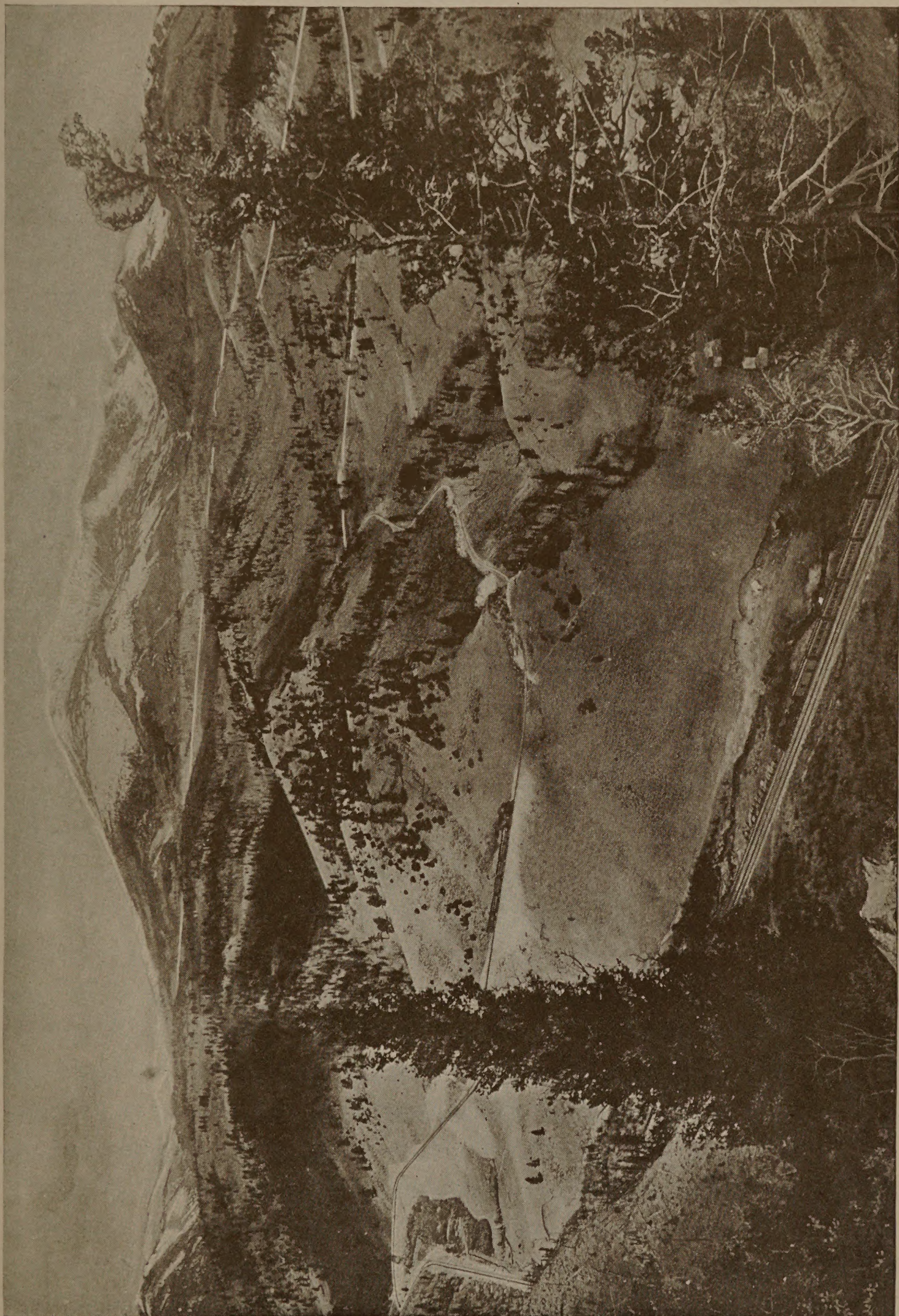
TRIPS INTO THE MOUNTAINS.

An attractive "Loop" trip of 167 miles may be made by automobile through the Cochetopa Forest from Salida. This run carries one over Poncha Pass, through the towns of Villa Grove and Saguache, crossing the crest of the Divide via the Cochetopa Pass road to the Tomichi River, then back by Monarch Pass, again over the Divide, and through the mining camps of Monarch and Garfield to Salida.

Automobile

"Loop" Trip

Shortly after leaving Salida, while running beside the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad to Mears Junction, the peaks of Mounts Ouray and Chapita may be seen on the right. The former is named in honor of the famous Chief Ouray of the Ute Tribe and is easily accessible to mountain climbers starting from Salida. The latter peak is named for Chapita, Chief Ouray's wife, and is also accessible. The summit of Poncha Pass is soon reached, and from this point one obtains a magnificent view of the San Luis Valley, stretching for miles to the south.

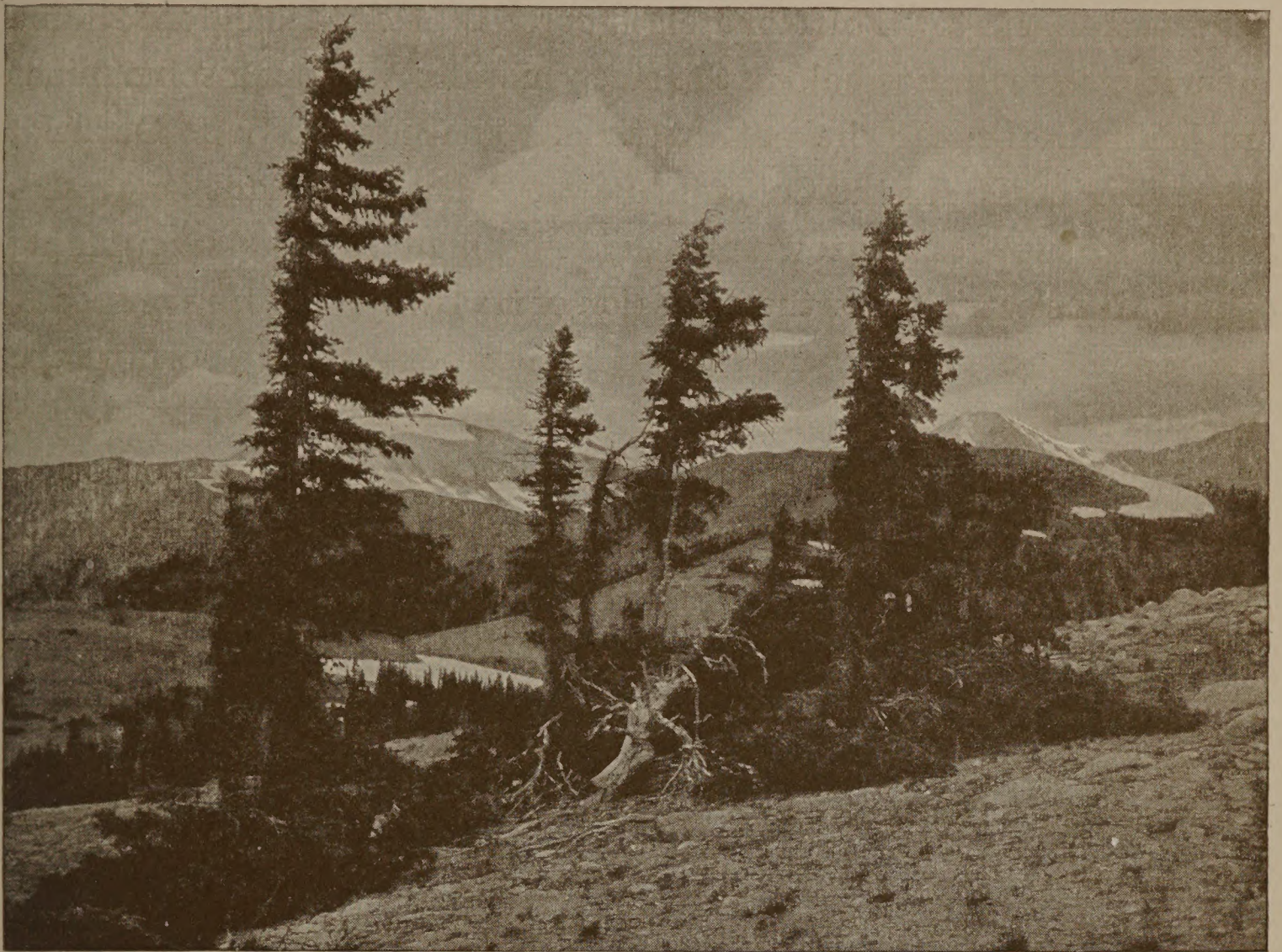


MARSHALL PASS AND MOUNT OURAY (FROM SHIRLEY)

The first town is Villa Grove, an old camp that has been the headquarters for many mining ventures. Twenty miles from this town Saguache is entered through shady lanes that give the traveler a refreshing sense of coolness after the trip over the hot desert mesa.

From Saguache the Cochetopa Pass road follows the Saguache River almost to the top of the Continental Divide. A stop at any of the streams en route will insure the angler a good catch of rainbow, native, or brook trout. The road winds by easy grades through the pine and spruce woods of the Cochetopa Forest to the top of the Divide, where a sign informs the motorist that he is 9,992 feet above sea level and on the crest of the backbone of the continent. Three miles from the summit is a Forest Service road camp, beside which is a public telephone connected with the Mountain States Telephone & Telegraph Co.'s exchange at Saguache. Travelers who have observed any unextinguished fires on their trip are requested to call the nearest Forest officer and notify him of their location. The effectiveness of the fire-suppression system maintained by the Forest Service in the National Forests depends in no small measure upon cooperation on the part of visitors. Travelers and pleasure seekers in the National Forests are earnestly requested to aid in the preservation of the timber and other resources by never leaving a camp fire until it is out and by using care with lighted matches, tobacco, and cigar and cigarette butts when in the woods.

From the summit of the Divide the road follows Los Creek and the Cochetopa River to Parlin. The San Luis Peaks, at the source of the Cochetopa River, are at some distance to the left. The road over Cochetopa Pass is one of the scenic attractions of the Forest, as it winds around the heads of the canyons and along mountain streams, the grade ending in a loop at the bottom of the pass on the Cochetopa side. The valley here widens out and is given over to hay ranches, with hundreds of cattle grazing on the hillsides and in the pastures. Los Pinos Creek enters the Cochetopa River in this valley. Looking up this creek one sees the old Indian



NEAR THE "TOP OF THE WORLD." WIND-BLOWN SPRUCE AT TIMBERLINE
IN THE COCHETOPA NATIONAL FOREST

Agency, about 6 miles distant. A short run down the river brings one to the town of Parlin, where the road over Monarch Pass is encountered and the first leg of the return trip is begun.

Two routes lead to Monarch Pass, one through the town of Sargent, the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad division point between Salida and Gunnison, and the other by the Waunita resort, where there are medicinal springs. On Tomichi River, below the mining camp of Whitepine, the climb over the Pass is approached. A short side trip may be taken to Whitepine, where the serious effects of a forest fire are still visible. This fire destroyed thousands of feet of young timber and required the efforts of fifty men for two days to get it under control. A stiff climb over a good road carries one to the summit of the Pass, where a fine view is obtained of the Arkansas Valley. Here the last leg of the journey is begun. At the foot of the

upper grade the town of Monarch is passed. Many abandoned mine tunnels may be noticed along the steep hillsides, although some mines are being worked at the present time. The next town is Garfield, where the intake for the Colorado Power Company's plant is located. This plant supplies the town of Salida and many surrounding mining camps with electricity for the operation of tramways, lighting purposes, and for power. From here the road follows the South Fork of the Arkansas River to Salida, where the "Loop" trip is completed.

Saguache Park is easily reached from Saguache by wagon or on horseback, and is an excellent place for a camping and fishing trip.

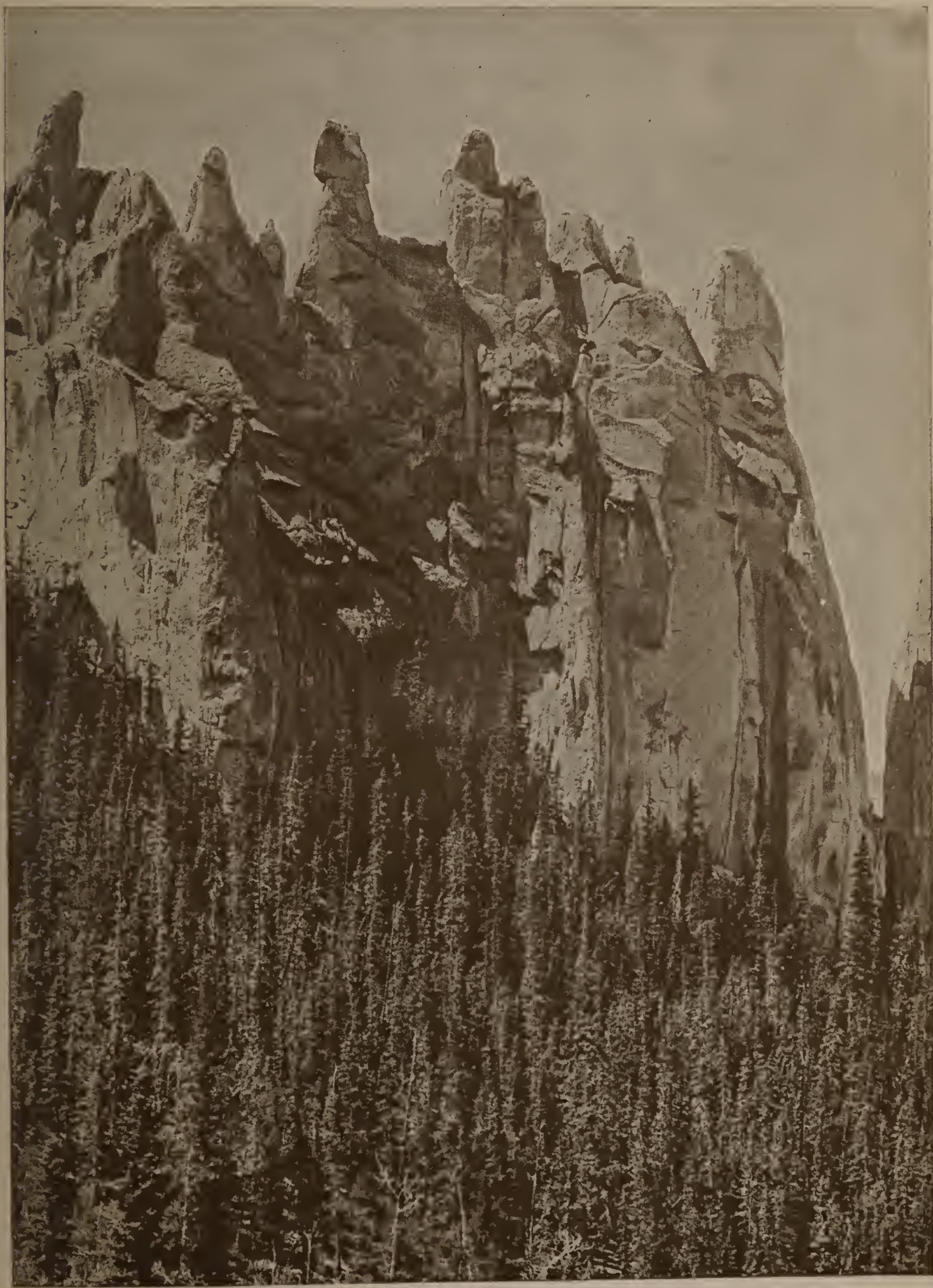
**Saguache Park
Outing Trip**

Many points of geological interest are found in this locality. The Chimney Rock, Ant Hills, and other queer rock formations afford the camper ample opportunities for sightseeing. The Park also furnishes winter range for some 60 head of elk. This region has many points of interest and is enjoyable, but it does not support the forest growth that one delights to see while on a vacation, although the surrounding hills are reproducing a valuable stand of young timber. The country was burned over many years ago. It will take decades to replace the millions of feet of timber that were destroyed, and few other places in the Rockies afford a better example of the devastation wrought by the careless use of fire in the woods.

Where time is limited, a one-day trip over Marshall Pass to the Gunnison River may be made via the Denver & Rio Grande

**Marshall Pass
Rail Trip**

narrow-gauge railroad. This famous Pass crosses the Continental Divide at an elevation of 10,856 feet. In a serpentine trail the track winds in and out, each turn occupying higher ground than the preceding, until by a series of giant loops the Great Divide is scaled, and the train stops on the summit, more than 2 miles in the air. The forests of the lower mountain slopes, with their grim and unsightly fire scars, here give way to stands of stunted pines and spruces and grassy meadows vivid with brilliant-hued timberline flowers. To the north and south are range



CATHEDRAL ROCK, 800 FEET HIGH

upon range of the Rockies with their dark green, gray, or snow-white summits. Nearby the crater crest of Mount Ouray looms magnificent, overshadowing the little Government ranger station nestled at its foot, where an officer is stationed during the dry summer months to watch for forest fires.

As the train pulls out from the summit station the Atlantic slope is left behind, and the track follows the Tomichi River down the western slope through beautiful stretches of forest and meadow lands to the valley of the Gunnison River. Soon one arrives at the town of Gunnison, the commercial center of the valley, where connections are made with the train returning to Salida.

Fishing
Trips From Saguache an enjoyable trip may be made over Pinos Pass to Cathedral. This road traverses the most heavily timbered portions of the Forest and is noted for its scenery. To enjoy this route fully, one should go by wagon, with plenty of time to spare, so that at least one camp may be made on the head of Los Pinos Creek. Fish are very plentiful in this stream and grouse are numerous along the ridges. Upon arriving at Cathedral, on Spring Creek, the celebrated geological formations from which the settlement takes its name are found a short distance up the canyon. These rocks rise in fantastic pinnacles, which at a distance resemble the spires of some cathedral nestled away in this remote region. The Cebolla River and Spring Creek unite near this point and flow into the Gunnison River. The Cebolla affords fine fishing and will well repay the angler who takes the trouble to get away from the more traveled highways and who enjoys the mountains. From the canyon, about 6 miles above Cathedral, a trail leads to the Cannibal Plateau, where legend states the notorious Packer, being overtaken by heavy snows, killed and ate his companions.

Other noted fishing waters of the Forest are the Cochetopa, and Tomichi, Saguache Rivers and Carnero, Middle, and Spring Creeks. These streams are stocked each year by the Forest Service with young fry and afford keen sport even for the inexperienced angler.

MOUNTAIN CLIMBING.

The high peaks of the Cochetopa Forest afford many delights to the mountain climber. At the southern end are Stewart and Bally Chato Peaks, which may be ascended on horseback by good trails leading to their very summits. San Luis Peak is more precipitous and must be climbed on foot. From the crest of these beacons of the range one sees impressive panoramas of rough canyons and high mountain meadows and plateaus and silvery streams winding their way down the mountain through narrow passes, and the dense forests below.

On the northern part of the Forest, Mounts Ouray and Chapita, and Antoro, Sheep, and Shavano Peaks provide climbing of an entirely different character than that in the Cebolla country. These mountains are easily ascended, and the view from their tops will well repay the traveler for whatever effort is involved in the climb. At



A PICNIC PARTY AT TIMBERLINE ON MONARCH PASS

the foot of the peaks one sees the small streams which unite to form the Arkansas, while the valley of the same name stretches eastward for miles along the river.

The elevations of the principal mountain peaks of the Cochetopa Forest of interest to climbers are:

Shavano.....	14,239 feet.
Antoro.....	14,245 feet.
San Luis.....	14,149 feet.
Stewart.....	14,032 feet.
Ouray.....	13,956 feet.
Bally Chato.....	13,200 feet.

RESORTS AND OUTFITTING POINTS.

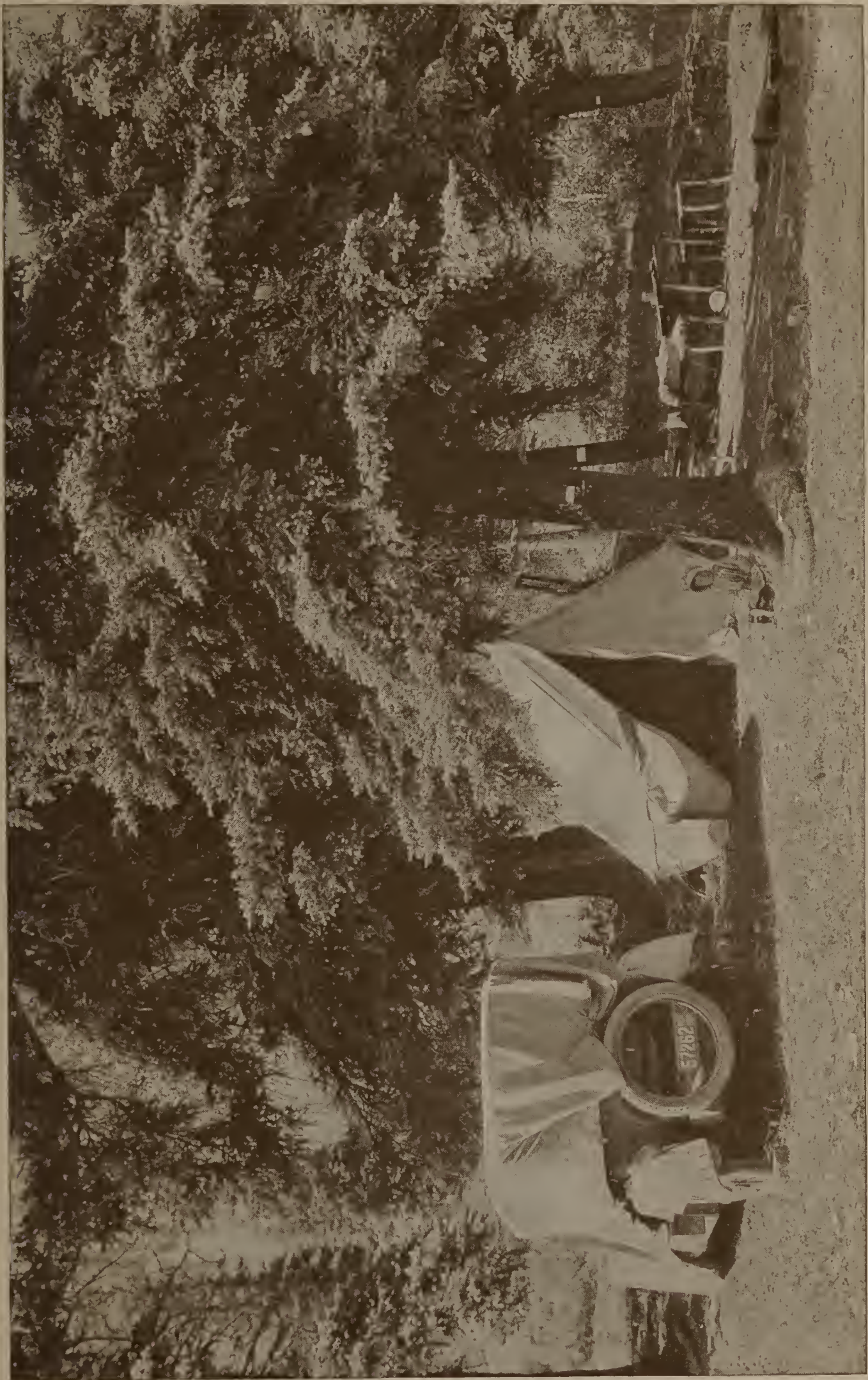
Salida, located at the north end of the rugged Sangre de Cristo Range, is 215 miles from Denver, on the main line of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, and has a population of 5,000. Four laterals of the "Rainbow Route" automobile highway converge at this point, and ample hotel, garage, and livery accommodations are available.

Saguache, the county seat of Saguache County and the headquarters of the Cochetopa Forest, has a population of about 1,220, and is located on Saguache River 20 miles from Villa Grove. Mineral Hot Springs is the shipping point, as Saguache is not located on the railroad. Three garages, where automobile accessories may be purchased, two department stores, and two good hotels are found here.

Villa Grove has a population of about 100. It is the supply station for the mining camps at Bonanza. Mineral Hot Springs is located between Villa Grove and Saguache. Bath houses are provided for those who wish to take a medicinal bath.

Poncho Springs, a small town 6 miles from Salida, is noted for the hot springs which are found on the mountain side a short distance above the town. A good automobile road leads to the springs.

Sargents, a division point between Salida and Gunnison on the Marshall Pass division of the Denver & Rio Grande, is on the Marshall Pass branch of the "Rainbow Route," and gasoline tanks may be replenished here.



AUTOMOBILE CAMPERS IN THE COCHETOPA NATIONAL FOREST

At Parlin, another small railroad town at the junction of the Monarch Pass and Cochetopa Pass roads, gasoline and motor supplies are available.

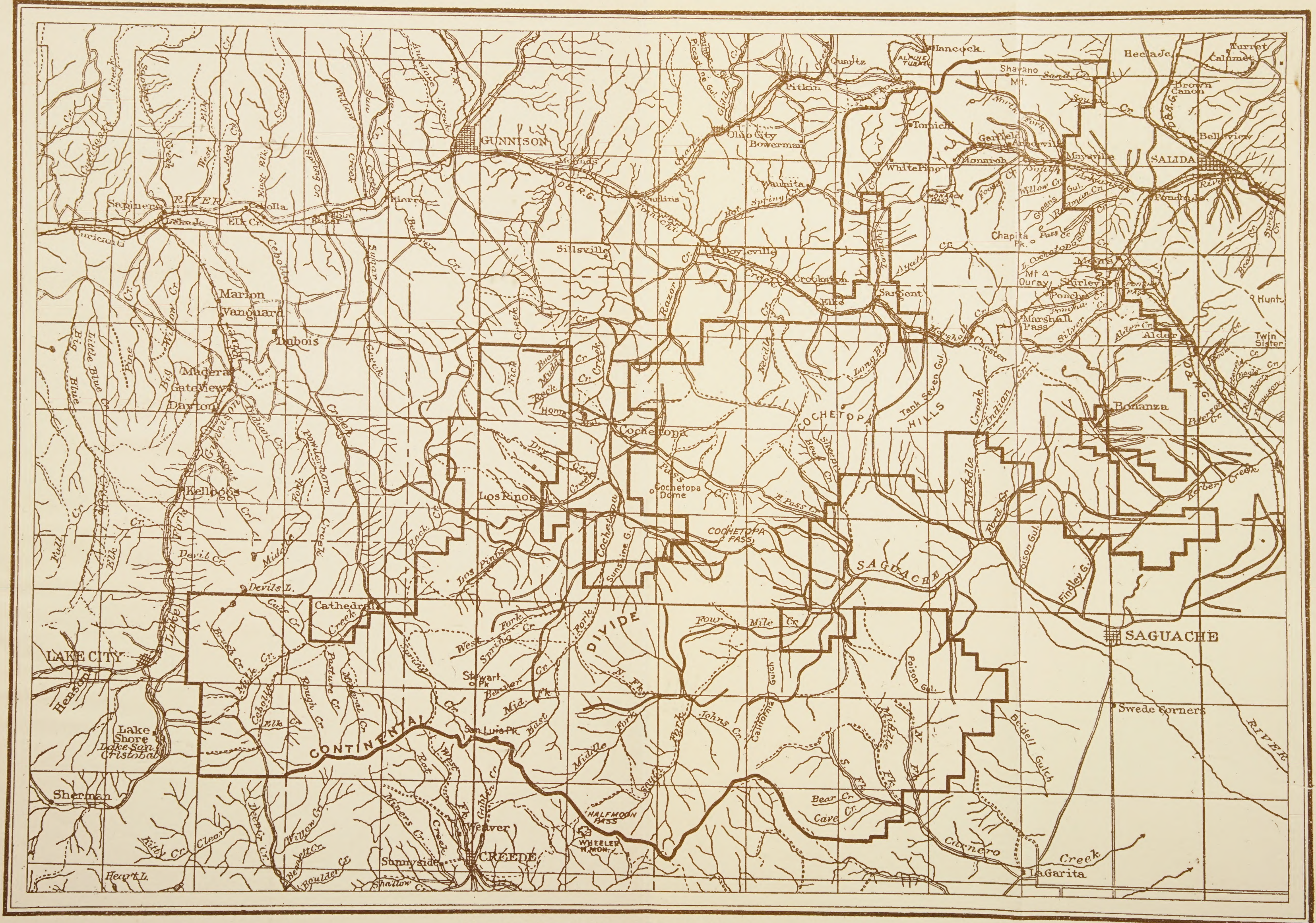
LINES OF TRAVEL.

The Cochetopa National Forest may be reached by automobile stage running from Moffat, on the Salida-Alamosa branch of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, to Saguache, and also by private automobile from Parlin, on the Gunnison division of the same line.

Ranger stations are located in many parts of the Cochetopa, and Forest officers will gladly furnish information on the best camping and fishing grounds and on roads and trails. Detailed information on all scenic and outdoor life features may also be obtained from the Forest Supervisor at Saguache.

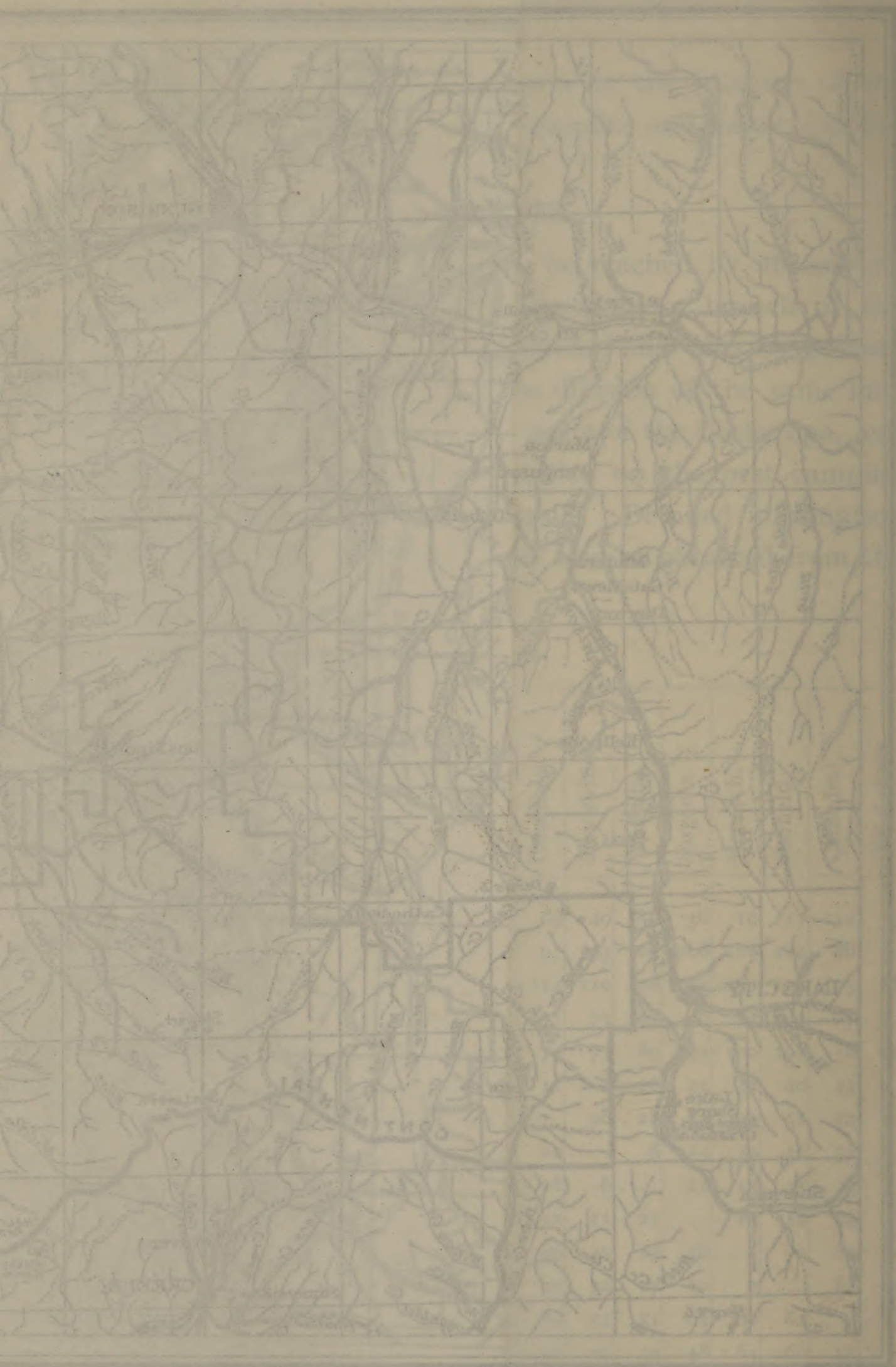
TABLE OF DISTANCES.

	Salida.	Villa Grove.	Bonanza.	Saguache.	Saguache Park.	Parlin.	Gunnison.	Doyleville.	Waunita.	Sargents.	Monarch.	Garfield.	Cathedral.	Old Agency.
Salida.....	.....	27	44	47	85	112	69	49	57	36	19	17	112	97
Villa Grove.....	27	....	17	20	58	85	97	93	101	106	122	124	86	71
Bonanza.....	44	17	....	37	75	102	114	110	118	123	139	141	103	88
Saguache.....	47	20	37	....	38	65	77	73	91	96	102	104	67	51
Saguache Park.....	85	58	75	38	....	63	75	71	89	94	100	102	38	20
Parlin.....	112	85	102	65	63	....	12	8	16	21	38	40	43	27
Gunnison.....	69	97	114	77	75	12	....	20	28	33	49	51	54	39
Doyleville.....	49	93	110	73	71	8	20	....	8	13	30	32	51	35
Waunita.....	57	101	118	91	89	16	28	8	....	21	13	15	58	43
Sargents.....	36	106	123	96	94	21	33	13	21	....	16	18	64	48
Monarch.....	19	122	139	102	100	38	49	30	13	16	....	2	80	64
Garfield.....	17	124	141	104	102	40	51	32	17	20	2	....	82	66
Cathedral.....	112	86	193	67	38	43	54	51	51	64	80	82	....	15
Old Agency.....	97	171	88	51	20	27	39	35	43	48	64	66	15	....



MAP OF THE COCHETOPA NATIONAL FOREST

The solid black line represents Forest boundary. Distance between solid light lines (township boundaries) represents 6 miles



MAP OF THE COO

The solid black line represents forest boundary. Dis-

